

Sept 2000

Club Dives  
Weekends Away

Social Outings  
Wreck Diving

Reef Diving  
Boat Diving

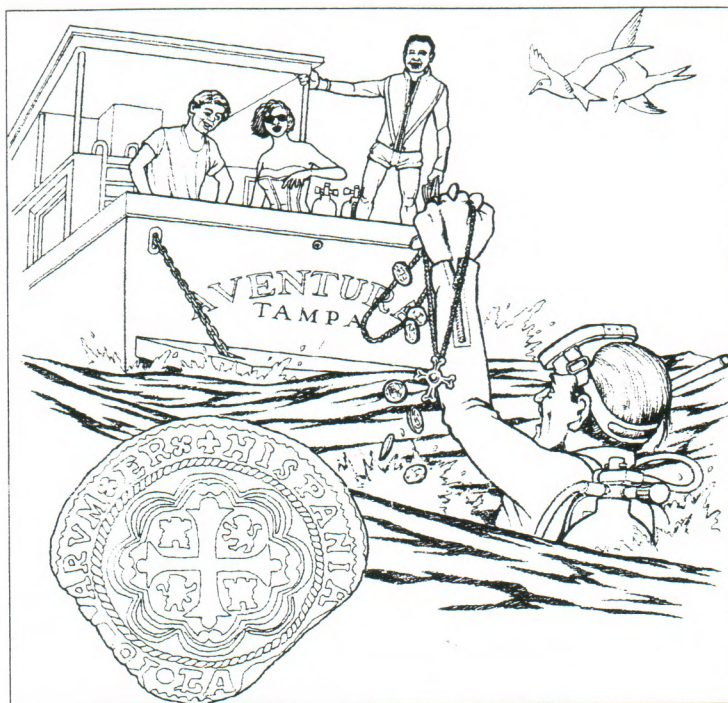
Shore Diving  
Night Diving

# South Pacific Divers Club

Established 1960

Monthly Newsletter

## Wet Rag



### CONTENT:

Editorial.....	2
Presidents Message.....	2
Minutes of Last Meeting.....	5
Club Sponsors.....	4
Committee Members.....	4
Shipwreck Stories.....	7
Club News.....	5
A Slice of History.....	2
About South Pacific Divers Club....	4
Gizo Harbour.....	8
Back Page.....	8



The South Pacific Divers Club Newsletter WET RAG is published by South Pacific Divers Club and edited by Tom Byron. All material submitted to the newsletter should be sent to Tom Byron 1 Bastille Close Padstow Heights 2211 Sydney NSW. Phone (02) 97745965. E-mail: tombyron@telstra.easymail.com.au. Other correspondence should be sent to South Pacific Divers Club PO Box 823 Bankstown



## EDITORIAL

What's going on here? I will have to watch out for this new Photographic Officer bloke, it would appear that he wants more than his fair share of space. Did you see what he has done, taken up my column, so just watch it son.

Editor

*Tom Byron*

## PHOTOGRAPHIC OFFICERS REPORT

Hi to everyone

Firstly I would like to thank Glen Percy for all of his efforts as Photographic Officer last year, it was a tough job and not an easy task. Thanks Glen.

The George Roberts Memorial will be starting in February 2001. A lot of people have asked if it can be run after Christmas as this is the time many club members get into the water and generally gather a number of good shots. I will let you know the format as we get a little closer.

I would like to hear from everyone as regards our South Pacific Divers Club Photo Competition as to why people did not enter.

Was it: Time? Did not know about the competition? No photos? Sick of it? Need to change the format? Did not think your photos or videos were good enough? Was it the prizes? Should we not have it at all, or combine with something else? Any ideas or comments would be appreciated if you could phone me on 0418 255 089 or e-mail [gmcneil@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gmcneil@bigpond.net.au)

You will be interested to know that the NZ "Oceans" comp which is very large only got 60 entries this year. The PNG comp is going to be run every second year now due to lack of interest. So it isn't SPDC that's having trouble attracting entrants.

Happy Snapping.

*Gray*

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

As we move into spring the weather is becoming a little warmer and some of our divers will stagger out of hibernation and maybe get a little wet.

So all you club photographers get your cameras ready for the George Roberts Trophy it's coming up in February 2001.

I would once again like to reassure members that the Australasian Underwater Photographer of the Year will be held in the foreseeable future with a different format.

Another thing I would like to say and that is the club would appreciate more members attending monthly meetings and BBQ dive outings, so try and make the next planned outing your social get together with South Pacific Divers Club members. Make the club a success. Support our monthly meetings and outings.

President

*Bernie Kraul*

## A SLICE OF DIVING HISTORY

### 1953

An underwater photographic Competition, the first in Australia, was announced in January of 1953 by the USFA on New South Wales.

Three girls Cynthia Leech, Pam McGee and Diana Dewar made an all girl scuba dive in January 1953, a first in Australia for women scuba divers.

The first scuba school in Victoria began on Monday September 10, 1953, and was named, Victorian School of Underwater Diving and Swimming. It had 20 students and the course ran for 6 weeks.

Australia's first woman underwater movie star was Pam McGee who starred in a film called "Deep Down, Down Under".

### 1954

South Australia's first scuba club was formed in July 1954, its name was The Underwater Explorer's Group.

Three scuba divers reached 200 feet a couple of months after the Victorian's deep dive. They were Dave Rawlings, Ron Harding and Dave Brown, from New South Wales.

Green Island and its reefs near Cairns, was the scene of the first full-length film about the Great Barrier Reef.

Maker of the first Australian underwater camera housing Rod Fackrall died in April 1954.

Scuba divers discovered the wreck of the *Dundar* south of Sydney Heads. They were Don Linklater, Keith White, Rod McNeill and "Mad" Mick Shanahan.

New South Wales first scuba diving school was named, Underwater Swimming School of Sydney (USS). Its founder and proprietor was Edward du Cros. The school began operation in 1954 with 4 self taught instructors, 2 men and 2 women. It ran for 2 years.

Jim Agar commenced manufacturing the first Sea Bee regulator in 1954. The company now known as Airdiver Equipment has been manufacturing regulators for the Australian and overseas markets ever since.

Scuba diving with spearguns started in the early 1950s and became common practice, "who would go out there among all those sharks without protection".

## From the book HISTORY OF SPEARFISHING AND SCUBA DIVING IN AUSTRALIA.

The first 80 years 1917 to 1997.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Tom

I've been reading the newsletter recently and decided to make a contribution. I don't even have to make any of it up.

I perforated my right ear round window in August 1999 for the second time. I had it grafted in December and despite still suffering imbalance I made my first dive back in early March 2000.

Discovery dive of the sunken *Marina Star*, narcosis got the better of me which cut the dive very short.

I've done four dives since on this wreck and I would suggest anyone thinking of diving it to do so before it loses its character.

Last weekend I rang Martin Atkins to go diving and I'd had such a bad week I thought I'd go down and spend the weekend. So Saturday morning I got there about 8.30 to be greeted by Rebecca Davies who also needed to dive that weekend. "What a perfect getaway".

So three of us headed for Stoney Creek to dive The Wall and a small trawler wreck in 50 metres of water.

The sea was calm with a light off shore breeze. Surface visibility was 30 metres and a mild current was running. After battling with all her gear Rebecca was just about to roll off the boat when her just serviced regulator would not deliver any air, which as you can imagine with almost perfect conditions annoyed her no end. We could not even lend or mix match a regulator for her so we had to enjoy the dive without her.

We left the top of the wall with a total ascent time of 18 minutes.

We had lunch there anchored and watched three whales blowing and playing nearby. Then we headed for East Bowen Island where Rebecca and Martin had a dive and I stayed in the boat, again good visibility with perfect conditions.

Next day we headed back to Stoney Creek to dive the top of The Wall, 40 metres below to show Rebecca what she had missed the day before.

The sea was a bit sloppy and a stiff breeze had blown up over night. We also had an extra diver aboard, Greg

Maxwell. There was quite a noticeable current running over the wall and when we ascended to our decompression stop we discovered we had a southerly surface current running which had sprung up whilst we were diving. Makes you appreciate a good decompression set up.

Well we are planning a dive at The Banks 16 kilometres off Crookhaven Heads in August. The last time I dived there we had 45 metres visibility and spent 7 minutes at a depth of 60 metres. The diving here is mind blowing.

Yours  
Mark Hamilton

**Well, Mark it sounds as if you had a wonderful time at Jervis Bay.**

**For many years I have dived Jervis Bay and in particular Stoney Creek, the last time I was there we had three Apollo scooters and did a little exploring along the wall, the visibility was in excess of 30 metres and all the time we were accompanied by seals, it was mind blowing. I have also dived The Banks, its deep and a long way from shore, I have seen many large oceanic fish out there at times. (Editor).**

Hi Tom

I would like to thank all the members in the club for there support as I have only been diving for about 6 months, I find members in the South Pacific Dive Club easy going, very friendly and always helpful and funny at times. The club dive and BBQ are great, keep up the good work.

Also I went to Paintball on the weekend with about 14 other club members, we had a great time.

Thank you  
Peter Turner

**Peter, it sounds as if you had an**

**exciting time at Paintball. As well as scuba diving outings, the club has other attractions coming up in the near future, so stay tuned. (Editor)**

Dear Editor

I would like to write to you and the club of South Pacific Divers to express some feelings of a perspective member wishing to join the club.

I am told by some older members who left some time ago that a new and friendly atmosphere has settled over monthly club meetings and outings.

I believe this is due to the new President Bernie Kraul and his committee. It would seem they have injected new life into South Pacific Divers Club and because of this I am thinking shortly of joining along with a couple of friends of mine when we have obtained our diving certifications.

Yours sincerely  
Trevor Daly

**Trevor, thanks for your letter. I can inform you that you will not regret joining, we have lots of enjoyable diving and BBQ outings along with other attractions. (Editor)**

The club would like to see more "Letters To The Editor" among its members and other divers who read this Newsletter.

Our editor Tom Byron has broad shoulders and a thick head, and we think narcosis has got the better of him, so lay it on him as much as you can, he won't know the difference.



## FACT PAGE ABOUT YOUR CLUB

### What is South Pacific Divers Club

The South Pacific Divers Club was formed in the early 1960s by a small group of underwater photographers. Early members of the club enjoyed many different facets of the sport, such as cove diving, underwater photography, wreck diving and exploring along the north and south coast of New South Wales searching for new dive locations. Today at the beginning of the new century 2000, the club has changed from the early days, however it somehow remains the same. Major activities among its members are still underwater photography, wreck and reef diving. The clubs major event is the running of the annual Australasian Underwater Photographer of the Year.

### Club meetings

The South Pacific Divers Club meets every third Monday of the month at the Bankstown Sports Club. Meetings begin at 8.00pm. Enquiry at the entrance desk for the room number. All visitors are welcome to our meetings. Generally there are slide shows and drinks after general business.

### Who are the members

South Pacific Divers Club has members from various parts of Sydney and country areas of New South Wales. Its members come from all walks of life and enjoy one thing in common, scuba diving. Total membership is almost 75.

### Who are the people that run South Pacific Divers Club

A committee of six is elected once a year. The committee meets once a month generally one or two weeks before the main club meeting. It is the committees responsibility to run outings, produce a monthly newsletter, organise the George Roberts Trophy as well as fund raising and other activities.

### Benefits of membership

Meeting people who like yourself enjoy the sport of scuba diving. Weekends away, scuba diving along the coast of New South Wales. Club dives almost every weekend. Social outings. Instance dive buddies. 10% discount on all equipment to members, at Aqua Sports Scuba Centre.

### **CLUB SPONSORS**

Please support our sponsors

**Max Western (Sea Tamer 11)**  
Dive Charter Boat Port Hacking  
**Phone:** 95241818  
**Mobile:** 0418280791

**Aqua Sports Dive Service**  
**Glen Percy** 97082826

**Shiprock Dive**  
**Leo or Lesley** 95262664

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

For year 2000 to 2001

#### **President**

Bernie Kraul  
Phone: 96069731 H 97924333 W  
**0413 500 715**

#### **Treasurer**

Lin La  
93180142 H **Mobile:** 418648265

#### **Secretary**

Susan Tate 96813287

**Photographer Officer**  
Gray McNeill

#### **Equipment Officer**

Glen Percy  
97082826 W **Mobile:** 414275179

### **Newsletter Editor**

Tom Byron  
97745965 **Mobile:** 410596501  
**Email:**  
tombyron@telstra.easymail.com.au

**Wreck Diving Course:**  
**Merimbula on the 18th**  
**and 19th of November**  
**2000.**

**Contact Glen Percy**

**Nitrox Diving Course**  
**23rd of October 2000.**  
**Contact Glen Percy for**  
**further information**  
**about both dive courses.**



## CLUB NEWS

### PAINTBALL PAINTBALL PAINTBALL

Or should we say ouch ball! ouch ball! ouch ball!

For those of you that have never played this new wave sport/game before, let me say it is fun. fun fun. Yes it causes one to exert some effort to say the least. Yes you will come away with some bruises and yes you will learn about your level of fitness, but most of all you will learn about your inner self and have a ball ouch at the same time.

It was my first time and I had always felt that it was an expensive yuppie game. How wrong was I?

I, along with all of the rest of us who attended Sunday had an absolute blast. Even Peter Flockart, who I might add is not a new-comer to this game, whom I also might add, got shot in the top of the head and knocked out momentarily. reveled in the excitement that pervaded the entire days, KILL, KILL, KILL. Just picture this:

We all don camouflage overalls, plastic goggles that have face and side head masking. Those that hired ammo pouches filled them up with multi-coloured paint balls the size of jaffle lollies, those that don't fill their paint-gun hoppers and the males of us that still have a use for you know what, either hire cod protectors or in my case an old T-shirt sufficed and off we went, gung ho.

The fields are about an acre a piece with various layouts and various styles of rules for each game. They are littered with trenches, old vehicles and buses, sheds, aeroplane wings, tyres and drums, timber and mounds. No matter what one hides behind, one's back side still seems to get shot, not once but repeatedly, ask my bruises. Mitch seemed to think that my butt was his own private target. Is he a stealthy hunter? No! He just moves rather sloth like, in fact, yes, I think he did actually move forward at one time. Loi played terminator once, but declined to do so again for the second round and like a fool I took it on and soon realised why Loi didn't want the position the second time. To kill the terminator in a team he had to be shot in the head. To effect this the terminator gets peppered beyond belief until some enemy member learns to shoot straight at his head.

Glen was a General once, and once the General is shot that team loses and the game is over. Paul just had to make sure Glen was dead with a few extra shots. Glen face was entirely covered by his mask but we could see the steam rising, and yeah, the yells identified his death also.

Mr. Flockart decided to charge an enemy member so he could rearrange his head with the butt of his gun who kept shooting him after he was dead, but the referee stopped Peter. Where's all the fun gone. Glen found Sue's little butt inviting and peppered it a number of times in quick succession "ouch, yaps, eek, bugger", was what came from her lips.

Steve was asked to surrender after making a deal with the enemy in close proximity, but his silence was taken as an "up yours" and as he was in close quarters, dispatched forthwith.

Bernie was seen charging like a madman at the enemy lines, I think he died in the attempt, but it was impressive. You try having a 6 foot bearded German in jackboots with an Arnie pack charging down on you it's a little bit scary. Mark made a gallant effort to regain my hard won flags and in so doing assaulted a lassie who thought she was protecting our hard won ground. He said. "Surrender or die", wouldn't you if you were about to have your right nipple inverted for a month.

Phil advanced on to a roof top to get the bomb, but was left on his own after Steve covered our end of the building with a withering fire rate that eventually got me. Couldn't cheat, the ref was beside me. Nick "The Hezballah" was about somewhere doing dastardly things to someone.

Peter also was out there causing havoc. but he told us he really wanted to smoke Tony and so Tony declined to go on the day.

Evelyn played Cecil B, but Bernie forgot to charge the batteries, BERNIE! As we are all dressed the same it is very hard to make people out, especially as the sweat starts to distort one's vision and in my case, not having my glasses compounded the problem.

Now I got to tell you that this is but a portion of all that went on during the day and I think will be a topic of discussion for some time to come

GREAT DAY! *Duane*

## SOUTH PACIFIC DIVERS - MEETING

MINUTES 21st AUGUST, 2000

Commenced at 8 o'clock

Apologies: Peter Flockart, Rod Taylor

**Incoming Correspondence:** Bank Statement, URG Dive Bulletin, Dive Show Asia Dive Expo information, Doubt & Diving Newsletter, Terrigal Underwater Newsletter. \$100.00 refund cheque from Bankstown Sports Club re AV Night, Returned SPD newsletters Bill Atherton and David Bilbow, Marine and Coastal Community Network Waves Newsletter, Receipt SCAN \$20.00 Membership, SCAN Newsletter. Minutes accepted by Phil and Peter.

### Treasurers Report

Income Memberships	\$70.00
Deposit Skirmish day	\$250.00
BBQ Kurnell	\$148.00
Raffle	\$86.00
	<b>\$554.00</b>

### Expenses

Telephone	\$64.85
Postage	\$199.95
Printing	\$75.00
Bank Charges	\$0.61
	<b>\$340.41</b>
Cheque Account balance	\$1,036.04
Passbook account	\$6,908.00
Petty Cash	\$41.40
	<b>\$7,985.44</b>

Accepted: Chuck and Duane.

### Newsletter Editor

SCANS needs a representative - one meeting every 3 months. St George Rowers Club, Arncliffe. Next meeting October. Duane and Glen volunteered.

Tom recommended a club trip to Cairns/Thursday Island - Good as any reef around New Guinea area. Best time November/December. Try and get names together for club live aboard trip. Every 10 persons, one trip free approximately \$2,500.00, 10 days - free trip to be divided amongst members. Interested, see Tom.

### Photographic Officer

George Roberts competition will start in February and will run for 3 months. Any ideas or suggestion would be appreciated.

### Equipment Officer

All equipment president and accounted.

### Social Organiser

Skirmish report, lots of fun and bruises. Boat dives, using club members boats. Suggestions, Shellharbour. Nelson Bay weekend. Shellharbour easier to use local dive charter boat.



## Dive Report

**Jervis Bay:** Grey's report: 10 degrees water was cold in my dry suit. Visibility was OK Lots of sea dragons. Some Humpback Whales.

**Victoria:** Tom said that a diver was hunting crays in Victorian waters when a seal appeared and began swimming around him. He was busy getting the cray and when he turned around the seal was bitten in half with lots of blood in the water he did not see the shark.

**Terrigal Haven:** Duane saw a huge ray 7 feet across and managed to pat a cuttlefish, nice dive and plenty of schooling fish.

**Vanuatu:** Noel dived Hideaway Island and saw a purple leaf fish and lots of coral.

**Barrens Hut:** Good diving, big swell and good visibility but cold.

**Camp Cove:** Glen, was like a washing machine of mud but warm.

**Club Dive:** Kurnell a good turn up and excellent diving. Ran out of meat and rolls.

## General Business

**SCAN:** Membership reimbursed Gordon McDonald \$20.00.

**Skirmish Day:** Was a success. Duane - Reinforces that it's the responsibility of divers to contact the Dive Organisator to confirm on the day that the dive is still on. Divers responsibility to check. Terrigal dive was cancelled and that system worked well with people ringing in etc. Phil - suggested a visit to the War Memorial Canberra-Bradburne, Hall No1 well worth a visit.

Glen - SPD AV Night - all entries have been returned, he has personally spoken to a number of entrants. Has had lengthy discussions with Daryl Torkler who runs the Oceans competition in New Zealand. Daryl only got 60 entrants worldwide. Not many from Australia. End product appears that Australian photographers didn't enter that competition either. Oceans was marketed differently, but that didn't help them. Appears that the average photographer didn't enter either comp. A letter was returned with the slides asking "What did they feel we could do better?"

Suggested back to basics, re AV Night. Possibly forget the night and focus on the competition. Categories: Open, Novice, Video. This would keep costs down. The problem is more than just publishing it properly. We were, caught as we couldn't have the competition and prizes without the night, and we cannot have the night without entrants. Advertise through Dive Log and Sportdiver advertise dates, have judging etc. This year if we were not tied to the night, we could have still run the competition. Suggested - run competition/ publish winners names. Glen to help Grey

with sponsors and prizes.

Back to basics, increase entry fee's to cover cost of plaques/ trophies etc.

**Gordon suggested we place a positive story in Dive Log re SPD's continued good fun natured club that it has now become.**

Duane - Indoor Rock Climbing Wetherill Park. BBQ at premises, Sunday suggested - 3rd Sunday in October. Tentative date.

Michael - Re Web Site. Said to think of it as an Electronic Magazine. Easy way to inform club members of dives etc. Moving with the times. Interactive for members to dial in and check. Cost depends on our requirements.

Publish to inform members, very cheap \$150.00 per hour to build the site. Time depends on how extravagant we want it to be. Suggested 3 hours. Host site depends on size. Suggested 3 pages. Front page, photo page, contact/ text page. Ozemail - \$30.00 per month. 5 email addresses. 10 meg space. Register dive club as user - \$25.00 per month, free emails 10 meg space. Basically we need to decide what structure, colours we want. We can advertise - link to other associated clubs.

Suggested hanging off another web site (Dive, Oz). Sub-committee to be formed. If interested, please let us know.

**Glen received a letter from Suzanne Evans (former secretary) of the club. She won a prize in the 1998 SPD competition, Cavern Diving Course, but she cannot get the sponsor to honour her prize. This sponsor is a diver who runs a somewhat dubious cave diving school by the name of Robertson Cavern Diving Course, he has not honoured his obligations. He just ignores her letters/ calls etc. Glen is half way through a letter to him to see what the problem is. Glen suggested that Aqua Sports conducts another course for her, not accepting liability for this persons prize but making an offer as a member for the club.**

**Suggested we sent a letter of demand threatening legal action as he has already stalled Suzanne Evans for 2 years.**

## Raffle

**1st prize - Air Card- Aqua Sports**  
Peter Donley

**2nd prize - Boat Dive - Max Weston**  
Steve Fackerzley.

**3rd prize - 2 air fills or T Shirt**  
**Shiprock dive**  
Scott McGregor

## UPCOMING WEEKEND DIVE TRIPS

**JERVIS BAY \$350**

Reef Diving

Ocean Trek 23/24 September

**MONTAGUE ISLAND**

Seals

28/29 October 2000

**FORSTER \$210.00**

Sharks

4/5 November 2000

**MERIMBULA**

Wrecks

18/19 November 2000

## Bookings:

Contact Glen Percy at 97082826

## 2001

### FUTURE DIVE TRIP AWAY GREAT BARRIER REEF

Wreck and Reef Diving at the Far Northern Great Barrier Reef From Cairns to Thursday Island. Seven Days: Depart Cairns, Saturday, 6pm

**First Stop:** Pixie Pinnacle/Wall Cod Hole

**Second Stop:** Sand Cay - Fish Tunnel - Bligh Passage

**Third Stop:** Outer Barrier Reef

**Fourth Stop:** Coral Sea Great Detached Reefs

**Fifth Stop:** Cockburn Sound - Warrnambool Wreck

**Sixth Day:** Quetta Wreck

**Seventh Day:** Thursday Island From \$2933.00 to \$2266.00

If you are interested, then contact Tom Byron at 97745965

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

**Club Dive Shellharbour:** Sunday 8th October boat dive and or shore dive with BBQ.

**Indoor Rock climbing:** Third Sunday 22nd of October.

See Newsletter for further information or contact Burnie at 96069731 Home or Work at 97924333.





A series of articles about shipwrecks will appear on this page over the next twelve months.

## DISCOVERY OF AUSTRALIAN CRUISER HMAS *PERTH*

Reproduced from the book:

### ***HISTORY OF SPEARFISHING AND SCUBA DIVING IN AUSTRALIA***

First 80 years 1917 to 1997 Retail \$43.95 including GST

*Continued from last month*

The question seemed to leap at me. Was this the *Perth's* outer starboard prop I was on, or was it one of the older, but larger *Houston's*? I had to know the answer. A check of my air supply and instruments showed I had another ten minutes. With luck, there was time.

My attitude toward the shark pack had now changed. Having found one of two battleships I was looking for, somehow gave me courage. The sharks were the intruders, not I, and by the time I was ready to move, I had worked up hatred against them.

To reach the hull I had to cover three metres or so of open water. I waited for a break in their picket line and leapt across. Unfortunately, one of the sharks had got out of sequence in its circling and as I sprang from behind the protection of the blade, we very nearly collided. My Karate-like yell was a hundred per cent fright, despite my newfound courage, but it served its purpose and the shark nearly slipped a disc in its effort to avoid contact.

Working slowly up the hull, using anything I could find for handholds against the current, I noticed the sharks' interest was much less aggressive, and by the time I had reached the descent line they had disappeared altogether.

Grasping the edge of the deck, I peered through the porridge like sea at the superstructure. It was eerie, ghostlike in its stillness, and difficult to identify. Although realising that because of its size and complexity a

quick identification may not be possible. I started to move aft in the hope of finding something specific. Without any real purpose in mind I looked upward and for the third time that morning, I froze. Above me, like two dark outstretched arms, were the guns. I knew the *Perth's* guns were twin fifteen centimetres and that the *Houston* had triple twenty centimetres. From where I was I could only see two, but there may have been a third beyond my field of visibility. Working farther aft until I considered the angle was right, I pushed off upward from the deck and, by swimming hard across the current, just managed to rugby tackle the starboard barrel as I swept past. For a moment or two I lay there, catching my breath, then I worked my way along the barrel to the muzzle. The bore was almost choked with coral, and I remember that as I looked inside the barrel a small blue fish popped out. Measuring the bore against the back of my hand confirmed what I already knew. It was fifteen centimeters. I had found the HMAS *Perth*.

On the starboard side of the bridge, growing from out of the guard rail and defying the current, was a magnificent spray of Gorgonian coral. It was over three metres across and because of the depth it looked gray in colour, but in fact was probably orange or dark red. I was always careful not to damage it, for although the ship is now still and the mortal remains

of the men she took down with her have long since gone, I felt the coral spray represented a living tribute to the memory of both the ship and the men. After the survey dives were completed we began a serious search for the bell.

The position in which the ship was lying meant that the Quartermaster's lobby, in which the bell was meant to be kept, would be right underneath her, and the first approach was to try to move in under the port side of the quarterdeck and find the door leading inside the ship.

In the attempt to find the bell I made six separate dives in under the ship. The area was lonely and claustrophobic and not without danger, and it was always with a feeling of relief that I'd leave it when my time was up and swim out through the narrow opening into the relative brightness outside.

I found the door on the fourth dive. It was closed tight with all the locking handles dogged. I tried time after time to open it, using a hammer and crowbar, but couldn't and finally I was forced to accept the fact that as far as I was concerned the *Perth's* bell was irretrievable.

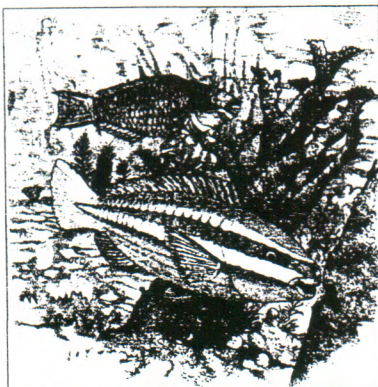
To get so close, almost within a few feet, and not be able to reach it was a great disappointment, but we had no option and reluctantly I decided to leave the quarterdeck to concentrate on other areas, in the hope of finding suitable artifacts to take back home.



## GIZO HARBOUR and MV PETAJ

By Neil Vincent

Continued from last month



For us to do the same would be equivalent of defending our home against an approaching thirty story building.

Surrounding the wreck is a desert of sand nothing appears to live.

However, closer inspection reveals a world of unusual inhabitants who use camouflage or live beneath the sand to evade predators.

Symbiosis, whereby two different species co-habitat, each supplying some unique benefit to the relationship, is common place among

creatures living in sand areas.

A small yellow Goby hovers above the entrance to a tunnel in the sand, bulldozing a mound of rubble before it's claws, a striped brown shrimp emerges from within the tunnel. The Goby positions over the top of the shrimp and at the same moment the shrimp's antennae touch either side of the Goby, both move forward as one. After spreading the load of rubble the shrimp backs down the tunnel leaving the Goby to guard. It's poor sight is not a handicap for the shrimp in the darkness of the underground tunnels which it constructs. However it is dangerous on the surface not to see a predator coming. It is with this the Goby assists, by moving quickly back down the tunnel at the first sign of danger, taking advantage to the shrimps tunnel for self preservation but also telling the shrimp to remain inside for safety.

An oasis in the sand desert, a small rock with the beginnings of a staghorn coral is surrounded by brightly covered tropical fish which flee into the coral branches when anything of a threatening size approaches. A trevally which is stationary along side the coral reluctantly begins to move away, as it does, a group of small clear shrimp hover away from the departing fish back towards the coral. Cleaner shrimp offering a fish detailing service, removing food, dead skin and other parasites from their clients, in turn, they eat all this material as food. My approaching too close, causes the shrimp to hover from their coral retreat, alight on my hand and begin cleaning. Moving methodically, picking off pieces of dead skin, their pinchers are barely felt. Watching these shrimp at work is quiet engrossing.

During the dive there is always the sounds of harbour traffic above, so surfacing at the end of the dive is best done by moving back to the into the shallow water near the shore. Care should be exercised even in shallow waters as the motorized canoes and long boats often travel close to the shore or come to the shore to unload people. They do not expect to see divers.

It may not be the main reason to visit Gizo but a dive in the harbour is simple and really worth doing. In addition to the MV *Petaj* there is a plane off the supermarket near the local markets and there is no telling what small creatures are still there to be found.



## Back Page

One of the biggest problems facing the club today, especially with monthly club meetings is the fact that when our bearded and unwashed scruffy President Bernie, gets a little excited, none of us can really understand a word he is saying. With a mixture of tangled English and broken German, can anyone really understand what our President is trying to say?

Some time back there was a diver who for a short time dived from my boat. Now this particular diver was prone to a little sea sickness and by the time this dreadful disease over took the poor fellow it was always lunch time. Fancy that. Taking advantage of every opportunity me and my scraggy old mate would eat his lunch. So we could continually get a free midday meal we would give him Aspro's instead of seasick tablets. That is until the day he got wise to our devious deeds. This particular day unknown to us there was no lunch in his bag and when he got sick we dived into his lunch bag to find it empty, and starved for the rest of the day. That was the last time I invited him out on my boat.

Now, there was once a long time ago at Jervis Bay, a new diver by the name of "Wally the Wog". Wally was a funny type of import, he always did what I told him to do without question, a big mistake Wal. He was the type of diver that's a swimming dive shop, I am sure we have all seen this type of chap before. Wal had every conceivable underwater gismo you can think of attached to himself, except his brand new underwater camera. I said to Wal, "just drop the camera overboard and collect it on the bottom". Well, Wal did exactly that. But I somehow forgot to tell him we were in 60 metres of water on the edge of a drop off. He could only go to 30 metres. After that I wondered why we never saw Wal again.